



AROUND NDE

A Publication of the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Human Resources ♦ May 2009

Employee/Manager of the Year 2009



Each year, NDE has the opportunity to recognize an employee and a supervisor of the year. Any NDE staff member may submit a nomination. In order for an individual to be eligible for the award, (s)he must meet the criteria below.

Employee of the Year [\(Form\)](#)

1. Be a permanent employee in a *non*-management/*non*-supervisory position with 3 or more years of service with NDE;
2. Have at least a satisfactory rating (i.e., meets expectations on all categories) on his/her most recent performance evaluation (to be verified by HR); and
3. Made some special contribution during the current fiscal year. Some examples include: a) recently completed a task or project of substantial importance to the agency and/or state government; b) continually extended self with co-workers and the public in a positive manner; and c) found ways to improve job functions and implemented the new strategies.

Supervisor/Manager of the Year [\(Form\)](#)

1. Be a permanent employee in a supervisory or managerial position with 3 or more years of service with NDE, having served two years or more at NDE as a supervisor/manager with supervisory responsibility for professional-level staff;
2. Have at least a satisfactory rating (i.e., meets expectations on all categories) on his/her most recent performance evaluation (to be verified by HR); and

3. Demonstrated achievement in: a) effective management; b) staff development; c) personal and professional skills; and d) other areas.

An employee should **not** be nominated for either award simply for length of service. Length of service is otherwise recognized. The form may be accessed by using the blue links. Please submit your completed nomination form to NDE Human Resources by **Friday, May 29**.

COMP TIME MUST BE USED OR PAID BY JUNE 30th

Employees with compensatory (comp) time balances need to do some planning as the end of the fiscal year approaches. As a reminder, the bargaining agreement mandates that comp time, when taken in lieu of pay, must be used in the subsequent sixty (60) calendar day period following the date the hours were worked, unless such period is extended by the Agency. Employees with comp time on the books at any time during this fiscal year must either be provided time off or be paid by June 30, 2009. This holds true even if the comp time is earned in June.

Not sure of your comp time balance? Supervisors may refer to the "Leave Balance Report" that is e-mailed to them monthly. Employees may check their leave balance in NIS by clicking on the following links:

Employee Self Service
NIS State of Nebraska
Self Service
Leave Balance Inquiry

2008 Retirement Report Now Available Online

The [Annual Investment Report](#) for the State Employees Retirement Plan and the Deferred Compensation Plan is now available online. The report is for the plan year ending December 31, 2008. In an effort to help the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS) save paper and reduce costs, NPERS no longer mails a copy of the report to each member.

NPERS 2009 Report to Legislative Committee

Each year, the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems makes an annual report to the Legislative Retirement Committee. The [2009 report](#) is now available online. Highlights of the report include:

- Total plan assets decreased from \$9.2 billion to \$6.7 billion due to the economic downturn.
- The call center answered approximately 33,000 phone calls and met with over 1,300 members.
- NPERS distributed over \$394 million in benefits to plan members across all six plans.
- Over 3,002 individuals participated in retirement seminars in 72 different venues.

Insurance Policy Beneficiaries vs. Retirement Fund Beneficiaries

Remember that the beneficiaries you designate for life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, etc. are separate from the beneficiaries designated for your retirement funds. While you may choose the *same persons* (parents, spouse, children, etc.) to receive your benefits should something happen to you, *you must make your retirement account designations using [NPERS' Beneficiary Designation Form](#)*. Any new form you sign and send to NPERS will

automatically replace what was previously on file.

If you have not recently updated your beneficiary designation, or do not remember who you designated, then complete a new form, have it notarized, and send it to NPERS.



School Retirement Seminars Age 50 and Over



Retirement Planning Seminars for School Plan members age 50 and over continue through July. Check out

the schedule below. For additional information or to register, click on the link below.

[Enrollment/Registration Form](#)

May 6	North Platte
May 7	Norfolk
May 13	Omaha
May 14	Lincoln
May 20	Valentine
May 21	North Platte
June 4	Grand Island
June 10	Lincoln
June 11	Omaha
June 17	Norfolk
June 18	Kearney
June 24	Lincoln
June 25	Lincoln
July 1	Omaha

Campaign Against Hunger

Lincoln-area NDE employees once again responded with contributions to the Food Bank of Lincoln. Staff at the NSOB collected four barrels of food and personal care items plus \$1,043 in cash/checks. Employees from the DDS donated one barrel of food/personal care items. Lincoln Vocational Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Partnership collected one barrel of food and personal care items and \$50 in cash/checks.

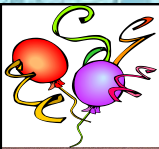
The team that donated the highest average number of items/cash, was the Red Team (Special Education) (86.8 average). They will get a pizza lunch in recognition of their donations. The Yellow team (Commissioner/General Counsel/HR) (21.5 average) and the Lincoln VR team (19.5 average) won second and third places respectively. Prizes were also awarded for the top three individual contributors who were: Beth Weirda (450 pts), Leslie Galloway (375 pts), Susan Peterson and Marge Harouff (150 pts).



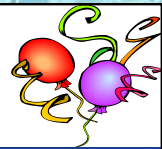
Thank you for your generous contributions.

JULY CELEBRATION 2009

NSOB Employees — Mark your calendars now for the 2009 July Celebration, which will be held on Wednesday, July 1st at 11:00 a.m. Stay tuned for more details.



New Employees



Benjamin Baumfalk
Program Specialist II
Data Services
February 4, 2009



Jennifer Benson
Education Specialist II
Early Childhood
January 2, 2009



Shelly Berggren
VR Associate
Grand Island
January 2, 2009

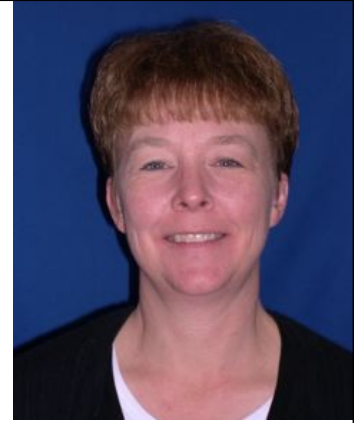
New Employees (continued)



Jeanette Evans
Education Specialist II
Adult Basic/Community Ed.
April 13, 2009



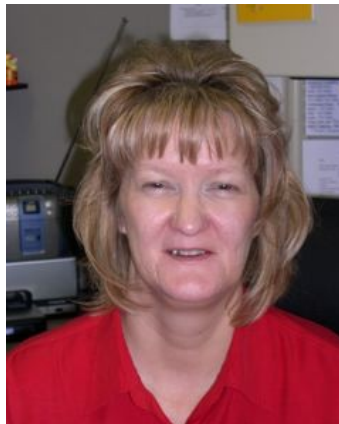
Leslie Galloway
Program Associate IV
Special Populations
March 23, 2009



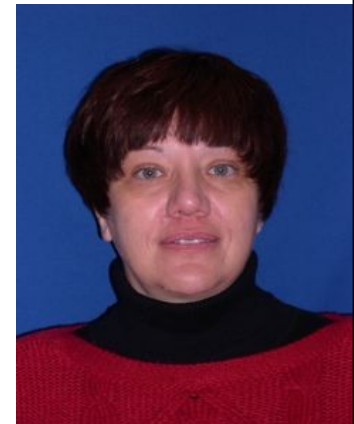
Stacey Hauser
VR Service Specialist
Lincoln
January 2, 2009



Rachel Lebaron
VR Service Specialist
Downtown Omaha
January 2, 2009



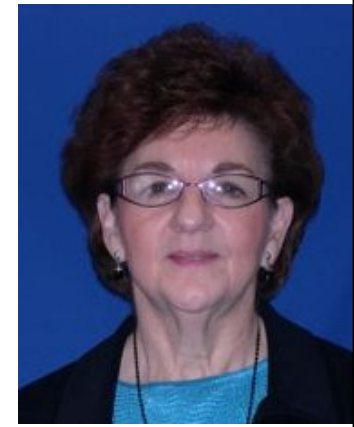
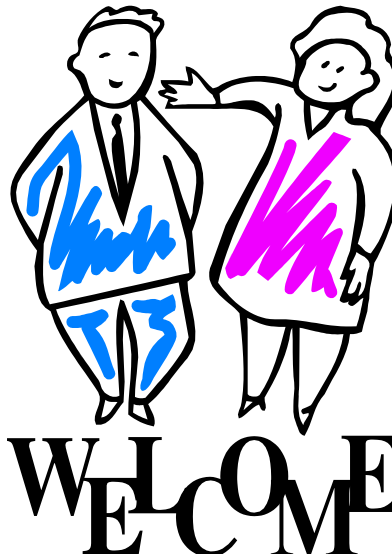
Debra Lockwood
VR Service Specialist
Fremont
December 15, 2008



Cynthia Muhlbauer
VR Rehab. Specialist
Downtown Omaha
March 23, 2009



Elizabeth Paesl
VR Service Specialist
West Omaha
February 23, 2009



Kay Parker
VR Associate
Lincoln
March 2, 2009



2009 Graduates

**Congratulations to the following employees
who will be receiving degrees, or have
family members graduating, this spring/summer**



Employee: **Lori Adams**
Graduate: Jason Adams
School: Southeast Community College-
Milford
Degree: AA in both Architectural
Engineering Technology and
Building Construction Technology
Plans: Seek employment

School: Southeast Community College-
Lincoln
Degree: Associate's degree in Electronics
Technician & received Cisco Certified
Network Associate certification
Plans: Work on Associate's in Micro-
computers and achieve CCNA
certification

Employee: **Lisa Brown-Olsen**
Graduate: Thomas Olsen
School: Central Catholic High School
Degree: Diploma
Plans: Hastings College; major in
International Studies

Employee: **Nicole Fisher**
Graduate: Nicole Fisher
School: Florida State University
Degree: Masters in Social Work (August)

Employee: **John Bulin**
Graduate: Courtney Bulin
School: Lincoln East High School
Degree: Diploma
Plans: Southeast Community College-
Lincoln; Culinary Arts, then
transferring to UNL for business

Employee: **Tracy Grieb**
Graduate: Ashton Kipp (son)
School: Scottsbluff High School
Degree: Diploma
Plans: Eastern Wyoming College and major in
Construction Technology

Employee: **Frankie Charles**
Graduate: Ravan Charles
School: Omaha North High School Magnet
Degree: Diploma
Plans: Creighton University; double major
in biology and French

Employee: **Shirley Gruntorad**
Graduate: Matthew Gruntorad
School: UNL—Institute of Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Degree: BA in Fisheries and Wildlife
Plans: Seek employment

Employee: **Jeanne Cope**
Graduate: Marilyn Buresh (daughter)
School: Degree: Lincoln Southwest High
Plans: UNL; undeclared

Employee: **Susan Hagen**
Graduate: Susan Hagen
School: UNO
Degree: MA in Sociology (Aug.)
Plans: Relax for a year, while
her advisor tries to
convince her to start a
PhD program

Employee: **Fran Denton**
Graduate: Chad Denton & Cami Daigle
(son & daughter-in-law)
School: Albany Law
Degree: Juris Doctor
Plans: Work at NYC law firm

Employee: **Dan Head**
Graduate: Lauren Head
School: UNL
Degree: M.S. in Speech and Language
Pathology
Plans: Seeking employment in a rehabilitation
facility

Employee: **Denise Fisher**
Graduate: Scott Fisher



(Continued on Page 6.)

2009 Graduates (Continued)



Employee: **Arvin Frazier**
 Graduate: Connor Frazier
 School: Omaha Northwest
 High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: UNO; major in
 Architectural Engineering

Employee name: **Paul Haas**
 Graduate name: Ryan Haas
 School: Lincoln Southwest High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Undecided; major in business

Employee: **Freida Lange**
 Graduate: Kate Damgaard (daughter)
 School: Doane College
 Degree: Master's in Curriculum & Instruction
 Plans: Currently teaching ELL students at
 Papillion South High School

Employee: **Jim Lukesh**
 Graduate: Barbara Lukesh
 School: College of St. Mary
 Degree: MS in Organizational Leadership
 Plans: Currently works at the Federal District
 Court

Employee: **Carol McClain**
 Graduate: Eden McClain
 School: Doane College
 Degree: Bachelor's in Human Services
 Plans: Seek employment

Employee: **Laurie McEntarffer**
 Graduate: Shawnta McNeel (granddaughter)
 School: Glenwood High, Glenwood, IA
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Grace University in Omaha; major in
 Veterinarian Technician

Employee: **Rita Meier**
 Graduate: Dylan Meier
 School: Grand Island High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Southeast Community College-
 Lincoln or Wayne State College;
 major in Business

Employee: **Lori O'Brien**
 Graduate: Noel O'Brien
 School: Norfolk Senior High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Northeast Community College; major
 in Criminal Justice

Employee: **Shayne Ortmeier**
 Graduate: Brittni Wolff (daughter)
 School: Waverly High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Southeast Community College-
 Milford; major in Graphic Design

Employee: **Joel Scherling**
 Graduate: Megan Scherling
 School: Lincoln Southeast High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Nebraska Wesleyan University; major
 in International Studies

Employee: **Alice Senseney**
 Graduate: Abigail Zadina (daughter)
 School: Westside High School
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: Brandeis University; major in
 Neuropsychology

Employee: **Sally Shepherd**
 Graduate: Crystal Livingston (daughter)
 School: Nebraska Wesleyan University
 Degree: Master of Science in Nursing
 Plans: Currently works at the Nebraska
 Heart Hospital

Employee: **JD Simmons**
 Graduate: Dallas Simmons
 School: Doniphan-Trumbull
 High School

Degree: Diploma
 Plans: CCC-Hastings or Hastings College;
 major in Elementary Education



Employee: **Becky Stahlecker**
 Graduate: Alexandra Stahlecker
 School: Boone Central High School (Albion)
 Degree: Diploma
 Plans: UNK; major in Radiology

2009 Graduates (Continued)

Employee: **Denise Thege**
Graduate: Lindsey Thege
School: Lincoln Northeast High School
Degree: Diploma
Plans: UNK; Nursing

Employee: **Crystal VanHousen**
Graduate: Laura VanHousen
School: Gering High School
Degree: Diploma
Plans: Western Nebraska Community College or Wayne State College; major in Pre-Physical Therapy

Employee: **Brenda Wid**
Graduate: Michael Nolan (son)
School: UNL
Degree: BS in Athletic Training
Plans: Graduate school at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; major in Master of Science in Education - Exercise Science



SPRING EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: A GROWING TRADITION



Don Janssen, from the UNL Horticultural Department, takes questions from the audience.

On April 22, 2009, NDE's New People, New Plants, New Beginnings plant exchange and employee recognition was held in the State Board Room.

Don Janssen, Extension Educator, Horticultural & Urban Agriculture, UNL Horticulture Department, provided a wealth of good information and fielded many questions from the audience. Did you know that you shouldn't mow your lawn very short in the first cutting? Janssen said that after the first cutting, you should raise your mower height to

around 3" to keep the root system strong, reduce weed growth, and help to weather the dry months to come. He said that most people think they should mow shorter in the spring and only raise the mower when it becomes really hot and dry. Another common mistake people make is to cut the grass too short at one time; no more than one-third of the blade of the grass should be removed at a time. For more helpful horticultural information, visit the [UNL Extension website](#).

A big thank you goes to those who assisted and served on the planning committee: Debe Dockhorn, Patsy Shald, Tammi Hicken, Heidi Arndt, and Cathy Roberts.

Thanks also to the following individuals who contributed items for the door prizes: Denise Fisher, Debe Dockhorn, Alice Fournell, Cathy Von Kaenel, Greg Stahr, Curt Schnase, NDE Card Club, NDEOPA, Colby Ridge, and Curves.

KS Office Professionals Visit NDE Chapter

The Nebraska Department of Education Office Professionals Association (NDEOPA) was very excited to have special visitors at our general meeting in March. Theresa Cote, Linda Wallis, and Beverly Smith from the Kansas State Department of Education Association of Office Professionals (KSDE AEOP) made the trip to Lincoln, Nebraska. Theresa is past president of KSDE AEOP and works in the Deputy Commissioner's office at KSDE. Linda Wallis serves as treasurer and works in the auditing department at KSDE, and Beverly is the current KSDE AEOP President.



Theresa Cote, Linda Wallis, & Beverly Smith, representing the Kansas State Department of Education Association of Office Professionals

It was enlightening to be able to meet one-on-one with them here in Lincoln! We had a wonderful lunch together, and then they attended our business meeting and spoke with us. We learned about how KSDE is run, and we were able to compare some of our challenges as office professionals with theirs. We also learned about their long-standing association and some of their programs and ideas. Theresa and other KSDE officers have been helpful throughout our process of beginning our local association at the Nebraska Department of Education.

A great piece of networking took place during their visit to Lincoln. Theresa, Linda, and Bev had spoken about their time entry recording at KSDE. They are still using a very time-consuming, paper-based system. We were able to share with them how we submit our time electronically each month. After our meeting, the KSDE members were able to visit with Paul Haas to learn about how our time keeping system is set up. We were also able to share information about KSDE's Employee Recognition Program with our HR Department. We hope they keep in touch and that this will lead to continuous networking between KSDE and NDE.

(Article contributed by Suzanne Wenzl)

Open Enrollment Updates/Reminders

- Open Enrollment Ends Friday May 15th at 5:00 pm CST. As a few employees have been experiencing technical difficulties, don't wait until the last minute in the event that you need assistance.
- Life, Long-Term Disability (LTD), and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) selections will not appear in NIS and will not be listed on your confirmation statement because it is not open enrollment for any of these insurances. (Changes may be made using paper forms, subject to evidence of insurability.) The coverage elected in the last open enrollment will be maintained for these insurances through 7/1/2010. The total deductions listed on the confirmation sheet may include these premiums. In some cases, LTD has not been included in the totals. If you want to update beneficiaries for any of these, please contact HR for the form.
- Not sure which health, LTD or life insurance plan you currently have? Log on to NIS and click on the following: Self Service > Employee Benefits > Current Elections > Next.
- If you selected the Wellness PPO plan, don't forget to complete the Health Assessment by 11:59 p.m. CST on June 1st.
- VR employees — Don't worry if you are seeing question marks (?) on your confirmation statements; this is just a formatting error.